

The invention of craft

historical magician, Robert-Hodin. Robert-Hodin was so well regarded that ! In the 2006 film, *The Illusionist*, Edward Norton plays a nineteenth century magician,

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Adamson, Glenn, 2013, Book, *The Invention of Craft* Bloomsbury Academic/V&A Publishing. ISBN 9780857850669

Information

Images

Abstract or Description:

The *Invention of Craft* is the sequel to Adamson's 2007 book *Thinking Through Craft*, which examined relations between fine art and craft in the 20th century. The 2013 sole-author book goes back to an earlier moment, the century from 1750 to 1850. Adamson's core argument is that craft was 'invented' during this period, as the antithesis of progressive industry. Rather than seeing artisanal customs and traditions as an unmoving backdrop against which modern industry emerged, Adamson argues for an active, dialogical process in which craft played a part in the formulation of unstable modernity. The book also includes discussions of contemporary practice: if the late 18th and early 19th centuries witnessed a divergence between craft and mass production, then we are now seeing a reconvergence in which, Adamson asserts, that earlier moment serves as a key reference point. Though Britain, as a main theatre of industrialisation, is prioritised in the book, Adamson also discusses case studies in India and North America.

Research for the book was carried out principally through examination of primary texts, both published and archival (including labour union records at the Bishopsgate Institute, London; documents on the lock trade at the Wolverhampton Historical Society; V&A Museum archival records; and numerous 19th-century newspapers and periodicals). Objects too were prioritised as evidence of historical change, and examined closely for the telling traces of production narratives. For the sections on contemporary practice, interviews were also an important source.

Before publication, *The Invention of Craft* served as the topic for invited lectures given by Adamson and open to the public at the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery (Washington DC), Los Angeles County Museum of Art, University of California-Berkeley and other institutions.

Subjects: Creative Arts and Design > W700 Crafts

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